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Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields

Letter dated 21 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring your attention to the text of the Declaration of the World Food Summit: five years later (see annex), endorsed by the Summit, which was held in Rome from 10 to 13 June 2002.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter together with the above-mentioned declaration, distributed as a document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 44 and 92.

(*Signed*) Sergio **Vento**
Ambassador

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Annex to the letter dated 21 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Declaration of the World Food Summit: *five years later*

International Alliance Against Hunger

We, the Heads of State and Government,* or our representatives, assembled in Rome at the World Food Summit: five years later (WFS:fyl) at the invitation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

Recalling the World Food Summit (WFS) held in Rome in November 1996 at which Heads of State and Government, or their representatives, adopted the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the WFS Plan of Action and pledged their political will and their common and national commitment to achieving food security for all and to an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their level no later than 2015;

Recognizing the urgent need to reinforce the efforts of all concerned partners as an international alliance against hunger, for the fulfilment of the objectives of the 1996 Summit;

Reaffirming the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food;

Reiterating that food should not be used as an instrument for political and economic pressure and reaffirming the importance of international cooperation and solidarity as well as the necessity of refraining from unilateral measures not in accordance with the international law and the Charter of the United Nations and that endanger food security;

Reaffirming the commitments that we assumed with the Rome Declaration and Plan of Action, which taking into consideration the multifaceted character of food security, encompass national action and effective international efforts to supplement and reinforce national action;

Acknowledging the considerable efforts which have been made in many countries to reduce poverty and improve food security, and recognizing the commitment of the international community to assisting this effort as expressed in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

Noting that the average annual rate of reduction in the number of undernourished people in the world was eight million and that if this trend continues, the WFS target of reducing the number of the undernourished by half by 2015, reaffirmed by the Millennium Declaration, will not be attained;

including biotechnology. The introduction of tried and tested new technologies including biotechnology should be accomplished in a safe manner and adapted to local conditions to help improve agricultural productivity in developing countries. We are committed to study, share and facilitate the responsible use of biotechnology in addressing development needs.

26. We recognize that the developing countries and countries in economic transition are facing difficulties in responding to the challenges and opportunities of globalization, in particular with respect to agriculture and food security, and we therefore agree in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity to consolidate FAO activities, in support of these countries to enable them to cope with the challenges and reap the benefits of globalization.

Resources

27. We call on all Member Countries, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector and all other partners in development to consider voluntary contributions to the FAO Trust Fund for Food Security and Food Safety and other voluntary instruments. The Trust Fund should serve as a catalyst for accelerating food production and improving food access in LDC, LIFDC and small island developing states, and for the prevention, control and eradication of transboundary pests and plant and animal diseases, and the preparation of investment projects, and south-south cooperation, in the aforementioned areas.

28. We stress the inherent linkage between rapid progress towards the targets of the World Food Summit Plan of Action, as reaffirmed by the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and the size, direction and efficient use of investment in food security, agriculture, rural development, food production, processing and distribution. As we agreed in the Monterrey Consensus, mobilizing domestic and international resources to reach those objectives, is contingent on several factors, inter alia: (i) an enabling environment for savings and investment in rural areas within the framework of a sound national macro-economic system, (ii) a broad-based national poverty reduction strategy aiming at improving access to food including through increasing food production and distribution, (iii) promoting opportunities for internal and external private investment, (iv) trade, (v) adequate attention in the national budget towards social-economic development, (vi) complementing national efforts with ODA in critical areas of social infrastructure and human development and (vii) transparent and effective management of public resources.

29. We urge developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7% of gross national product (GNP) as ODA to developing countries, and 0.15% to 0.20% of GNP of developed countries to least developed countries, as reconfirmed at the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, and we encourage developing countries to build on progress achieved in ensuring that ODA is used effectively to help achieve development goals and targets. We acknowledge the efforts of all donors, commend those donors whose ODA contributions exceed, reach or are increasing towards the targets, and underline the importance of undertaking to examine the means and time frames for achieving the targets and goals.

30. We welcome the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the inclusion of agriculture and food security as a component of this initiative. We invite the international community to respond to this initiative by financing programmes or projects, in the most appropriate manner, that reflect NEPAD principles and commitments.

31. We will encourage the international community to continue to provide technical and financial assistance to the countries with economies in transition with a view to fostering their food security;

Noting that hunger is both a cause and an effect of extreme poverty, and prevents the poor from taking advantage of development opportunities, that hunger eradication is a vital step in alleviating poverty and inequality, and that the international community has restated its commitment to the reduction of poverty. Observing further that 70 percent of the world's poor live in rural areas and depend almost entirely on agriculture and rural development for their livelihood; and noting the rapid increase in the numbers and proportion of urban people affected by poverty, hunger and malnutrition;

Conscious of the particular difficulties faced by all developing countries, in particular by the least developed countries (LDC), the low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDC), the small island developing states, and countries affected by violent conflicts, civil strife, land mines and unexploded ordnance, or exposed to desertification and natural disasters; noting further that global warming and climate change can have serious implications for food and livelihood security, especially in these countries;

Recognizing also the difficulties faced by the countries with economies in transition in addressing their food security needs in the process of conducting market-oriented reforms;

Concerned with the current estimates of the overall downward trend in the national budgets of developing countries and the decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) portofolios directly allocated for agriculture and rural development, as a contribution to food security;

Recognizing the important role of food assistance in situations of humanitarian crisis as well as an instrument for development, acting as an enabling pre-investment;

Reaffirming Commitment 4 of the WFS Plan of Action that trade is a key element in achieving world food security;

Reaffirming the fundamental importance of national production and distribution of food, sustainable agriculture and rural development, fisheries and forestry, in achieving food security;

Reiterating our deep concern at the debt burden on developing countries in particular the heavily indebted poor countries, and at its negative impact on resources for food security, inspite of progress in implementing the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative;

Recognizing that international economic and financial crises have shown dramatically the vulnerability of developing countries;

Noting with concern the acute threat of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the incidence of malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases, in particular those caused by water contamination in developing countries, and their devastating impact on food security;

Reaffirming our commitment to the Monterrey Consensus, which referenced the need to develop effective partnerships between developed and developing countries, based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development plans that embody poverty reduction strategies, and recognizing the value of exploring innovative sources of finance provided that those sources do not unduly burden developing countries, as important steps towards achieving sustainable food security;

Recognizing the importance of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in support of food security objectives;

Noting the outcomes of the world conferences, including the International Conference on Financing for Development, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Special

Sessions on HIV/AIDS in 2001 and on Children in 2002 and the 4th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) at Doha, and highlighting the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development of 2002.

Political will

1. We renew our global commitments made in the Rome Declaration at the World Food Summit in 1996 in particular to halve the number of hungry in the world no later than 2015, as reaffirmed in the United Nations Millennium of the Declaration. We resolve to accelerate the implementation of the WFS Plan of Action.

2. We call on all parties (governments, international organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector) to reinforce their efforts so as to act as an international alliance against hunger to achieve the WFS targets no later than 2015. With this aim, parties should promote coordinated action. Bearing in mind the contribution of all parties, countries should continue to report on progress to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), within its mandate as a focal point for the implementation of the WFS Plan of Action.

3. We recognize that progress had not been adequate to reach the WFS target. Recognizing that responsibility for assuring national food security rests with national governments in cooperation with civil society and the private sector and with the support of the international community, we resolve to accelerate implementation of action to halve hunger by no later than 2015. This requires a rate of hunger reduction of more than 22 million per year on average.

4. We stress that poverty reduction and food security strategies should, inter alia, include measures to increase agricultural productivity, food production and distribution. We agree to promote equal access for men and women to food, water, land, credit and technology which will also help in generating income and creating employment opportunities for the poor, thus contributing to reduction of poverty and hunger.

5. We reaffirm the importance of strengthening the respect of all human rights and fundamental freedoms including the right to development, democracy, the rule of law, good governance, sound economic policies, the equality of rights for all without distinction as to sex, race, language, religion, the resolution of conflicts in accordance with the UN Charter and respect for international humanitarian law, and international cooperation so as to solve economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, which are essential for achieving food security.

6. We call upon the concerned development partners to exert all necessary efforts to achieve the international development goals of the Millennium Declaration, particularly, those related to halving poverty and hunger by 2015, to improve and strengthen the indicators necessary for measuring progress and to monitor progress within their mandate; and to renew and strengthen the commitment to national and international systems in place to assess food security. We reaffirm the role of FAO, with World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF in monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goal on hunger and the importance of the Inter-Agency Working Group on FIVIMS (Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems) in strengthening national and international monitoring of food security.

7. The vast majority of the hungry and those living in absolute poverty are in rural areas. We recognize that reaching the goal of halving the number of hungry requires that the most food insecure and impoverished countries promote the alleviation of rural poverty especially through sustained growth of agricultural production, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

8. We reconfirm that FAO has a major role to play in assisting countries to implement the provisions of the WFS Plan of Action within its mandate, keeping in mind that the

WFS entrusted the Committee on World Food Security to monitor progress.

9. We believe that broad international partnerships are of utmost importance for the implementation of the WFS Plan of Action. We call on governments, the international organizations and financial institutions to utilize their resources effectively, to improve their performance and strengthen co-operation and to undertake joint efforts to combat hunger, and reinforce the key role of sustainable agriculture and rural development in food security.

10. We invite the FAO Council to establish at its One Hundred and Twenty-third session an Intergovernmental Working Group, with the participation of stakeholders, in the context of the WFS follow-up, to elaborate, in a period of two years, a set of voluntary guidelines to support Member States' efforts to achieve the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security; we ask the FAO, in close collaboration with relevant treaty bodies, agencies and programmes of the UN system, to assist the Intergovernmental Working Group, which shall report on its work to the Committee on World Food Security.

11. We specifically urge governments to review their ongoing national food security policies with a view to filling gaps, identifying new initiatives, removing implementation obstacles and streamlining inter-ministerial and inter-departmental policy initiatives.

12. We reaffirm the Monterrey Consensus and we urge all members of the WTO to implement the outcome of the Doha Conference, especially the commitments regarding the reform of the international agricultural trading system, with particular reference to paragraphs 13 and 14, given that international agricultural trade has a role to play, consistent with Commitment 4 of the WFS Plan of Action, in promoting economic development, alleviating poverty and achieving the objectives of the World Food Summit, in particular in developing countries.

Challenges

13. We reaffirm the need to assure gender equality and to support empowerment of women. We recognize and value the continuing and vital role of women in agriculture, nutrition and food security and the need to integrate a gender perspective in all aspects of food security; and we recognize the need to adopt measures to ensure that the work of rural women is recognized and valued in order to enhance their economic security, and their access to and control over resources and credit schemes, services and benefits.

14. We emphasize the need for nutritionally adequate and safe food and highlight the need for attention to nutritional issues as an integral part of addressing food security. The recent UNGA Special Session on Children addressed the need for investments in basic economic and social infrastructure and social services as well as social protection for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Attention should be given to improving the quality of diet; access to potable water, health care, and education; and sanitation. We recognize the importance of interventions to tackle micro-nutrient deficiencies which are cost effective and locally acceptable.

15. We reaffirm our pledge to the fight against world-wide conditions that pose severe health threats, and especially the spread of HIV/AIDS, which can have a uniquely devastating impact on all sectors and levels of society and consequently on food security. This requires new approaches, technologies and crops for labour deficient HIV/AIDS-affected farming households. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which constitutes an important step forward for concerted action at country level as well as for the mobilization of new and additional resources aimed at the prevention and treatment of these diseases.

16. We reaffirm the important role of Codex Alimentarius, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) to provide effective, science-based, internationally-accepted standards of food safety, plant and animal health, as well as to facilitate international food and agricultural trade in their role as the WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS)-recognized standard-setting bodies.

17. We pledge to continue to support efforts to strengthen developing countries' capacity with respect to the management of food safety and plant and animal health.

18. We should strengthen national and international action to prepare for contingencies and emergencies and to improve the effectiveness of emergency actions both through food and non-food based intervention. These actions must be integrated into sustainable development efforts with all stakeholders involved to achieve sustainable food security. We underscore the importance of developing the scope and coverage of social protection mechanisms, in particular of safety nets for vulnerable and food insecure households. We are committed to ensuring, through economic development, the use of early warning systems, and emergency assistance, that famine will never again be seen.

19. We recognize the merit of school feeding as a social development programme. It should be based on local or regional purchase where possible, and managed in a way to respect local consumption habits. In this regard, we encourage the development of the World Food Programme's (WFP's) school feeding programmes, among others, when implemented in accordance with national priorities and educational programmes.

20. We resolve to contribute to the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, recognizing the important role of the three Rome-based organizations, FAO, WFP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and to strengthen co-ordination and cooperation among national and international organisations, in order to make efficient use of resources, particularly in the areas of technical and financial cooperation, sustainable management of natural resources, fighting transboundary animal and plant diseases and securing food safety.

21. We stress the need to further promote sustainable forest and fisheries management, including sustainable use and conservation of aquatic living resources, in view of the contribution of those sectors to food security and poverty eradication.

22. We stress the importance of supporting alternative development activities that enable people engaged in illicit crop cultivation to reach sustainable food security and live in dignity.

23. Recognising the extent of poverty in the mountain zones, we emphasize the vital role of mountain zones and their potential for sustainable agriculture and rural development in order to achieve food security. We stress the need to build partnerships between developing and developed countries in this regard.

24. We pledge to work in the spirit of cooperation and solidarity to strengthen FAO activities, within its mandate, that enable the developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet food safety issues, to make better use of the benefits of research and technologies and to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities of globalization, in particular with respect to agriculture and food security. We also pledge to assist those countries, particularly their food producers, to make informed choices about, and to have access to, the necessary scientific and technical knowledge related to these new technologies targeted at poverty and hunger reduction.

25. We call on the FAO, in conjunction with the CGIAR and other international research institutes, to advance agricultural research and research into new technologies,

32. With a view to reversing the overall decline of agriculture and rural development in the national budgets of developing countries, in ODA and in total lending in international financial institutions, we call for an adequate share for those sectors of bilateral and multilateral ODA, lending by IFIs and budgetary allocations of developing countries, within the framework of the Monterrey Consensus.

33. We reaffirm that the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative provides an opportunity to strengthen the economic prospects and poverty reduction efforts of its beneficiary countries, thereby increasing food security. Speedy, effective and full implementation of the enhanced Initiative, which should be fully financed through additional resources, is critical. Heavily indebted poor countries should take the policy measures necessary to become eligible for the initiative.

34. We also reaffirm the Monterrey consensus to encourage exploring innovative mechanisms to address debt problems of developing countries, including middle-income countries and countries with economies in transition.

35. We call on all countries that have not yet done so, to consider signing and ratifying the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in order that it shall enter into force as soon as possible.

Notes

[a] When "Government" is used, it means as well the European Community within its areas of competence.